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le Rhymes From Oregon



By C. H. Sholes

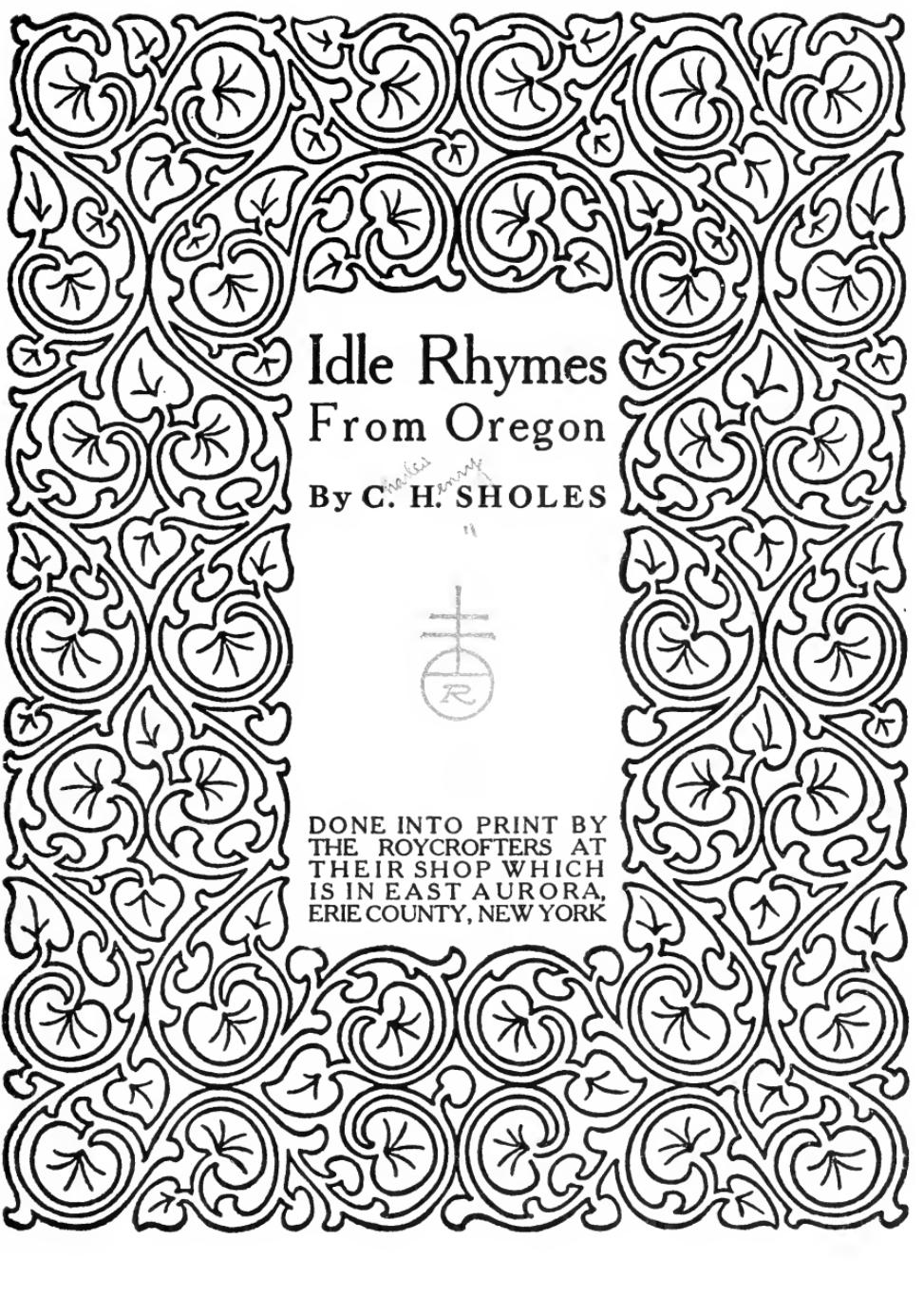


Photo by R. L. Glisan, Mazama Outing, Mount Shasta, 1904. Elevation 8500 feet.

WHITE-BARK PINE

Where mountain thunders shatter solitude,
Mid lightnings and the avalanche, thy home ;
The hurricanes thy comrades ; by cloud-foam,
Enshrouding snow and ice long months immewed ;
Till Summer, stirring after long prelude,
Dissolves thy wintry bonds, and from the Dome
Above thy gnarled and hoary trunk forth roam
The floods to sing thy harsh vicissitude.

On thee wild storms have carved in graphic runes
A thousand years of history : how rent, yet healed,
Thou still defiest Death, all-conquering tree !
Whose shining aureole ceaseless importunes
Calm gravitation's awful stress to yield
Thy anguished strain for immortality.



Idle Rhymes
From Oregon

By C. H. SHOLES



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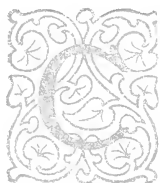
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HILDREN of Mist-land are these,

Dim pictures of idyllic hours;

As transient as leaves on the trees,

As sunshine in Oregon showers.

From land of the domes and the spires

O'er-shadowing turbulent streams,

Where forests use needles for lyres,

And poets find orphics in dreams.

Here Nature, supreme in her graces,

Surpasses the poet's best line,

While days' and the nights' commonplaces

Interpret man's visions divine.



A Mountain Walk *



IS DONE! Proud thought for one whose weary feet

Attest the long and toilsome road. I greet
Thee, Friend, whose rare and radiant health
Made glorious that August day, whose wealth
Of wit, keen argument, and charm of voice
Made miles mere sport of limbs, and lungs rejoice
To climb hot dusty hills, whence far outlook
Gave rich reward to toil. Our souls partook
Of nature's lavishness, and felt instilled
Primeval strength, like sweet wild wine distilled
In chalices of flower and fruit and tree.

To you, brave Heart, the enterprise; to me
Companion's part, to guide and choose the way,
To help—where little help was needed—make the day
For you more fair; to fetch the beaded cup
Or ruder vessel filled with sparkling brew
From singing brook or spring that bubbled up,
And hand it, clear, delicious, cool, to you;
Or, holding hand, restrain thee, soaring Sprite!
From taxing strength to dance o'er mountain height.

How well, discoursing of some great emprise,
Your voice I hear, and see your radiant eyes;
Remember how my sad, maturer fears
Oft sought to rein the visions of your years.
A vain attempt! for you were wedded strong
To thoughts that bore your trenchant words along;—
In vain! for you had optimistic youth,
And in opinion's warfare optimism's Truth!

* Reprinted from "Mazama: A Record of Mountaineering in the Pacific Northwest," by permission of publishers.

In our exalted mood how nature, cold
To languid eyes, her wondrous wealth unroll'd:
A stretch of tangled growth—green, red and brown;
Some vagrant willows tossing catkins down;
The barberry tree; wild grape of Oregon;
Hemlock and maple, whose lusty roots like Harpagon
Clutched fallen monarchs of the ancient wood
And sucked their substance up—devouring brood!—
Thus fastening life on death.

Then steeply ran
The road to high plateau, a level span
Mid park of giant pines whose yellow bark
The morning sun transmutes to gold. No cark
Or care could wrinkle here. Like page it seemed
Of heraldry: On emerald field gold gleamed;
Athwart the bosom of the sun-drenched land
A bosky canyon trailed its sable band;
And countless needles lace-like tracery
Wrought on filmy clouds or sapphire sky,
While Mount Kaniksu couchant brooded o'er
This coat-of-arms the clustering ranges bore.

Such riant growth of flower, fruit and shrubbery
As fringed our path must tribute pay ere we
Could haste to journey's end.—Why haste? A day
Like this might never dawn again; here lay
For one brief hour the burdens of our life
As journey we toward mountain peak. Let strife
And toil and trouble stand abashed before
Our spirits' calm, as threshold of God's door
Is crossed, His temple's glory seen.—No tasks
So light as those our mother Nature asks;
And so with never-wearied step and searching gaze

You turn aside to pluck a rose, or raise
A gorgeous lily droop'd in midday heat—
And crush the tender harebell 'neath your feet!
On marge of stream where moistened soil gave birth
In rank profusion to wild fruits of earth,
One found it pleasant cheer (who will, condemn,)
To pluck pink salmon-berry, leaving stem
"To nod like cowl'd monk's head" ('twas your conceit),
While you were off to bring me royal treat
Of strawberries wild, served daintily in hand—
A service such as king could not command.

Thus loit' ring, pausing oft in shade of fir
(Whose lyric soul responds to faintest stir
Of winds), we traveled many a mile. Our noonday camp—
Whereto came wearier friends who scorned to tramp—
Gave needful rest.

The way resumed, we mount
By easy steps to heights whose hours we count
As days in lowlands where the sluggish tides'
Remorseless power engulfs what swiftly glides
From mountain peak to sea, borne down by stream
Whose source is in the glacier: type supreme
Of nature's law that deathless plies eterne
To raze a mountain or rear the fragile fern.

Anon, tree-barren brownish hills, whose grand
And flowing curves seemed carved by artist's hand,
Or, reared like mighty crypts, support on high
Great dome of cloud and architrave of sky.
From east to west has rolled the silent sun,
Fair type of range our earnest thoughts have run;
Now evening twilight deepens forest gloom,

Adds pungency to wild wood's rare perfume
And whilst it dims, accents the glowing words
That nature writes in mystic, rhythmic chords.

As grandeurs thus unfold—wild wind-swept peak
Where winter's storms their wrathless vengeance
wreak,

Gloom-shrouded canyon, distant height cloud-plumed—
Less need to talk. Yon shifting clouds, illumed,
Enshroud the wooded range that girds the lake
Where we, encamped, shall idle respite take
From speech and walk, and lying round the fire
Dream o'er the joys the day has brought, respire
The tonic air, then sleep in cedared tent,
Or 'neath a canopy of fir through which besprent
The stars look down, to list to loon's weird cry
So desolate, such haunting wail as 'twould defy
The world to purge the infinite main
Wherein it poured its life's exquisite pain.



July Song of Mount Hood



EHOLD! I am clothed in garments of glory,
My graceful cloud-banners flung out to the
breeze;

Fierce sunbeams wrinkle my forehead hoary,
While thunders the avalanche down to my knees.


My torrents and glaciers, unfettered for gain,
Expending their strength in joyous turmoil,
Resistlessly flow, and disperse in moraine
My cloud-piercing cliffs, and my grandeurs despoil.

Unheard by the ear of the indolent throng,
Triumphant and wild in their midsummer glee,
My rivers and canyons, in tumult of song,
Are singing a rondeau of clouds and the sea.

Above my white apex the infinite deep;
Submerging my feet vast forest of pine,
The chant of whose organ is sweeter than sleep,
The spice of whose breath is richer than wine.

So mild are the days when I slumber and brood
An infant could sleep in the sun on my breast;
But Titan am I when aroused, so beware of my mood
When gales and the snow sweep over my crest.

Home From Alaska

OUL-WEARIED of that somber land, and
throng
Of worshippers of gold its Arctic shores upon,
I sought surcease at sea—the sea's wild song
A bugle-blast for mist-blown hills of Oregon.

Where Lynn Canal's wild surges swelled and roared
And shook the stars from startled dawn,
I watched with longing heart our progress toward
The fragrant mist-blown hills of Oregon.

Triumphant ocean's melancholy sweep,
Long nights, and days cold, drear and wan,
Vexed sore the anxious heart, till thought did leap
Wild miles to muse on mist-blown hills of Oregon.

The desolate reefs of barren gleaming rock
Whereon the ceaseless billows roll and fawn,
Flung transient clouds of mist that seemed to mock
My flight to distant mist-blown realms of Oregon.

Gray stormy days at sea, and then I rose
'Neath higher sun and balmier skies, to don,
Where harbor-thronged Willamette flows,
My mist-blown cloak in fir-crowned Oregon.

Chilcoot Pass



'ER headlands bleak and in the narrow canyon
A strange foreboding hung;
The south wind crooned, and from the peak of
Gagnon
No bright snow-banner swung.

The south-born mists in-drifted from the ocean,
And with the mountain's breath
Commingling, by a swift and fierce emotion
Presaged the gloom of death.

All night the soft snow-flowers falling
Clothed deep the mountain slopes;
A calm that in those passes seemed appalling
Gloom-tinged the toilers' hopes.

When bright the morning sun broke o'er the mountains,
The boom of avalanche
And bell-sweet tones of myriad cliff-born fountains
Made bronze-faced miners blanch;

For Death rode on the pregnant air that morning,
And startled looks were cast,
As Nature's birth-pangs whispered warning
To doomed men as they passed.

But stronger love of home and greed for gold
Than warning words of guides;
Not of the danger rocks or young or old,
So long as Want abides.

Down frowning walls, its yeasty mass up-boiling,
The Chilcoat terror fell,
And sent a hundred men from hopeful toiling
To agonies of hell.

Like thwarted surges soundless depths returning,
Their footsteps fall no more;
Rough hands from struggling, hearts from yearning,
They slumber on Time's shore.



White-Bark Pine*

(Translation from ancient hieroglyphs.)



HERE God's stern thunders shatter solitude,
With lightnings and the avalanche, thy home.
The crippling Winds, hurled downward from
the Dome

Where throned in naked space among her brood
Of shivering stars White Death her ancient feud
Maintains against encroaching Life, gloam
Sullenly down on thee, rifting the cloud-foam,
Uncurb'd in drear rock-wild infinitude.

Now grapple with the bellowing blast, great Bole!
Storm-racked and bleached by thousand snows, sun-
healed,
Rune-carved, and writhing in gnarled agony
To lift the quenchless green of thine aureole,
Death thou defiest. Tortured, thou wilt not yield
Thy anguished strain for immortality.



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WHITE BARK PINE (*Pinus Albiculis*)

The Water-Ouzel



BLISSFUL Sprite! enrapt of solitude,
Elusive as the light, effect or cause
Art thou of charms which make all human
laws

And ties less dear to me than wildest wood?

Shy songster of the canyon's misty mood,

Where sun and shade keep tryst with spray and pool,

Where fragrant winds dip in and shift and brool,

And filter sunshine on thy tender brood,

Wouldst thou could put some magic in my blood

To make me throb and thrill and sing like thee,

Out-rivalling e'en thy stream's impetuous flood,

Thou Joy incarnate, woodland ecstasy!

What thou hast give me, O marvellous bird,

To sing my joys and sorrows in one word.



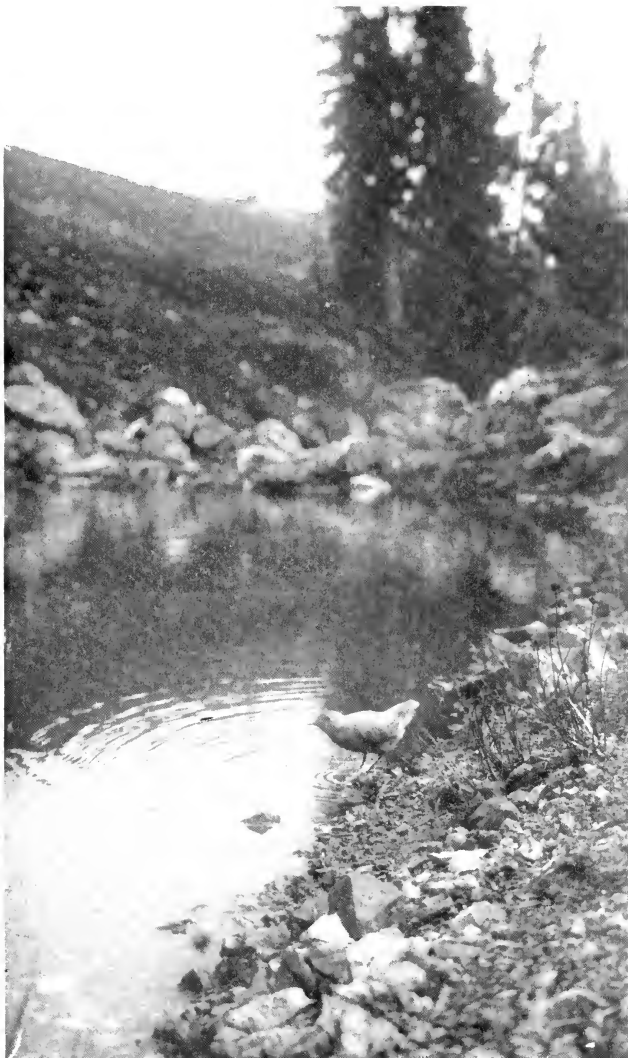



Photo by Gertrude Metcalfe, Mazama Outing, Mount Baker, 1906.

THE WATER-OUZEL

To secure so fine a picture of the Ouzel in his native haunts is an achievement worth mentioning. The result exhibits that rare coincidence which might be striven for a thousand times without success. The bird has just alighted—witness the numerous ripples in the water—and his whole being is so alert with doubt, suspicion and curiosity regarding the intruder, that one can almost see his wings quiver with indecision. A quarter of a second sooner or later, and the film would have spelled failure.

On Summit of Mount Shasta

ERENE on Shasta's utmost spire I stood,
With joy of conquest filled; its western flanks
Obscured by thunder-clouds, whose dark'ning
ranks

Uprose and swelled, a threat-intoning brood;
The lightning glowing red (like opal fire-imbrued
Within its matrix rough) burst thro' their liquid banks,
Then downward rushed—a silver-plumed phalanx—
Cool streams to bless the parched and waiting wood.

“The mind of God as perfume”—fragrant breath
Of lofty heights—swept by and canceled Death.
So deep was life, so wide the human span,
All things I either felt or saw or heard;
The universe seemed uttered in one word,
And Time itself shrank back from mortal man.



Nesika Klatawa Sahale



BETWEEN Gibraltar's cliffs and flowery vales
Lies wondrous land of snow-girt hills,
Whence waters rush in thousand rills,
And trees are twisted sore by mountain gales.

Vast fields of spotless snow like ermine furs
Thrown over shoulders of a king;
While here and there, to make them cling,
The jagged aiguilles bind them on the spurs.

In cold gray dawn the mountain's shrouded height
Looms mystically in half-eclipse,
A heaven-born apocalypse
To those who slowly climb by stars' dim light.

Gigantic spire and stately minaret
Rise round its shattered rim,
Remote and grand as Seraphim
When hurtling storms its towers of granite fret.

But now the mountain smiles, as rising sun
In gallant mood enwreathes
Each rugged cliff; anon, it breathes,
And on its mighty breast the avalanches run.

The dying glacier, leaving furrow wide and deep,
Pours its torrents icy cold
And the tumbling seracs hold
Death and terror in their fitful summer sleep.

A river's mighty canyon lies below,
Carved out like sculptured flight of song,
While toward the heights its babbling tongue
Flings joyously its murmurs soft and low.

At last, exultant, gazing rapture-bound
From azure-piercing mountain peak,
Too awed and over-joyed to speak,
The weary climbers pause amid the vast profound.



Sunset Storm on Mount Hood



ARK mystery looms upon thy radiant height;
Storm-burdened clouds grope round in sullen
mood;

Their swirling masses gloam with unheard
brood

Of winds that shriek and shrill and flare the light
Of passing day, and bear on eagle-flight

The pageant grand. Where erstwhile calmly stood
Thy peak in July majesty sun-wooded,
Now stalks the shuddering gloom of Arctic night.

Thy rosy flush departs; gray ashen Death

Falls on thy breast, then reaches for thy crown,

While round thy crags the lightning leaps fire-shod.

Enrapt, in solemn hush one scarce draws breath,

But gazes hungry-eyed upon the vision lown

As thou art ambushed in the heart-of God.



The Storm Cloud



SWIRLING storm-cloud, a symbol thou art
(Shattered and frayed on the mountains
above)

Of my torn and tempestuous heart,—
Torn by insatiable longing for love.

O heart-storm-cloud of helpless despair,
Why with such pain dost burden my breast?
Thrall unto death, and haunted by care,
Following blindly my quest.

O storm-cloud courted by lightning and wind,
Why to my anguishing heart dost thou come
Wild with the freedom of love that is blind,
Shouting your joy to a soul that is dumb?

O storm-cloud careering 'twixt heaven and earth,
Wild as the seas are, freer than death,
What has my heart to exchange for your mirth—
Heart full of lullabies wasting its breath.

O storm-cloud submissive, bathed by the sun,
Robing the mountains in splendor and gleam,
Out of the sunbeams thy fabric is spun,
To vanish like joys, as swift as a dream.

O storm-cloud tattered like scarred battle-flag,
Marching in columns and drenching the land,
Heaving huge masses in rage at the crag,
Self-love is a fruit turns ash in the hand.

O storm-cloud gleaming, cloud of the night,
Piercing the gloom with your heart's wild fire,
How little I fear you, I laugh at your might,
Fire of your heart is less fierce than desire.

Soon you will give to the sands all your treasure,
Vanishing cloud, O cloud fleet flying:
I only can give without stint, without measure,
Only love is exhaustless, love only undying.



Love's Alternate



If you were sunset beauty,
And I were evening song,
We 'd voyage in a dory
Across the ocean hoary,
Seizing the shores for duty
And taking the tides along,
If you were sunset beauty,
And I were evening song.

If I were what the clouds are,
And you were queen of rain,
You 'd be what sails to ships are,
Withold me where sweet lips are,
To sprinkle where the crowds are
And lavish on the plain,
If I were what the clouds are,
And you were queen of rain.

If I were artist-gifted,
And Love were beaten gold,
Our love would strengthen daily,
We 'd gather flowers gaily,
While self-denial lifted
The pain of growing old,
If I were artist-gifted,
And Love were beaten gold.

If you were queen of mountains,
And I were lord of day,
I'd kiss you every morning,
Caress you past all scorning
Despite the laughing fountains,
And melt your icy way,
If you were queen of mountains,
And I were lord of day.

If I were howling ocean,
And you the fruitful shore,
I'd pass the fragrant islands
To woo your lofty highlands,
And teach you by devotion
To love my lusty roar,
If I were howling ocean,
And you the fruitful shore.



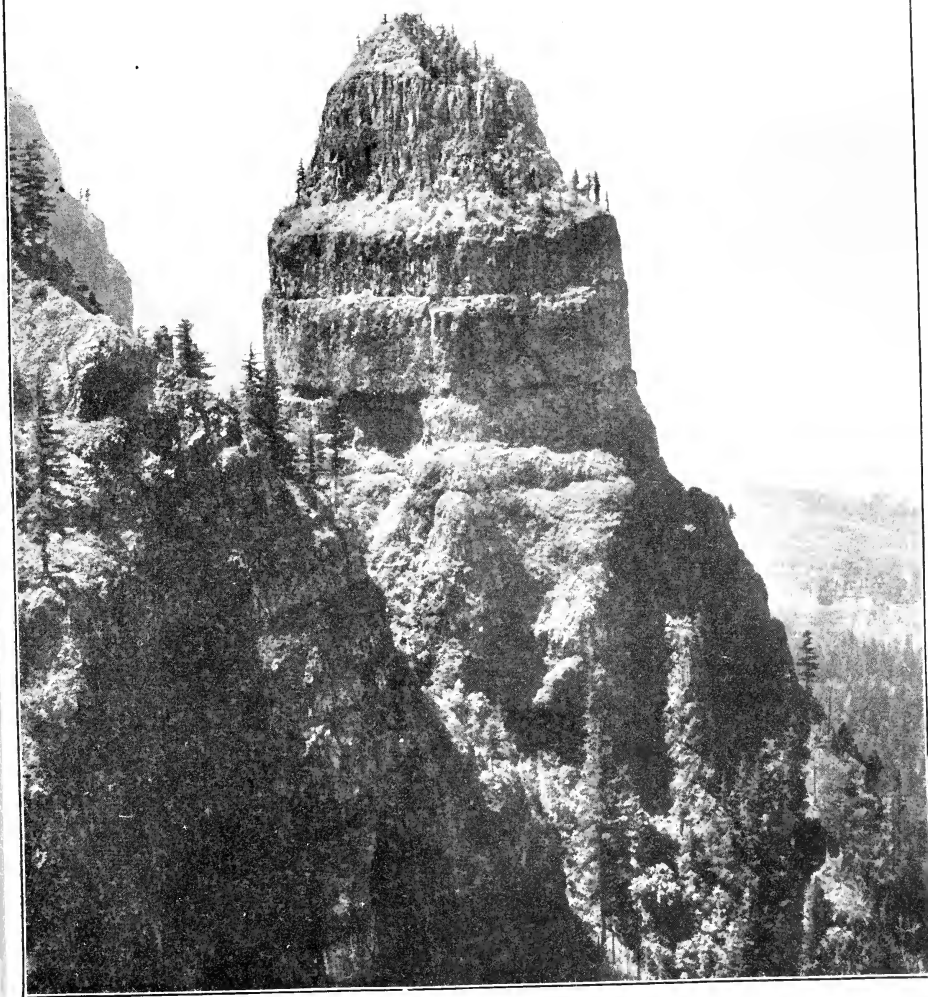
St. Peter's Dome



HOSE fancy first thy majesty essayed,
O mighty Dome? Who first foundations laid
To rear that soul-exalting fane? Did master-
hand
Of Michael Angelo first build thy grand
Proportions, carved from storied hills of Rome
Where Tiber's yellow flood rolls to the sea?
Or was this greater temple reared in Western land
By Nature's primal force, wrought free
From granite peak that lifts its rough-hewn wall
(Deep-worn by nursling streams that fret and brawl)
Beside Columbia's roaring gorge, to shine
Eternal monument of Angelo's design?

Where can the eye gaze on thy counterpart,
O unsuspected archetype of Art?
From thee we learn what Nature's law commands:
How day by day and year by year her hands
Have shaped to noble form her concept vast—
Foreseen in rock-ribbed mountain, sculpture-cast;
With equal ease disposed that huge entablature,
And wrought its matchless frieze in miniature,
Or raised those slender spires on dizzy height
With baffling skill, as seeming airy-light
Upon that massive bulk as tufts of fern
That fringe a garden wall.

Yet when Oblivion stern
Shall raze the Artist's work, this grander Dome
Will rear its lichened walls to lure the eagle home.



Copyright 1903. Kiser Photo Co., Portland, Oregon

ST. PETER'S DOME
(Columbia River. Elevation 2700 feet)

Mount Hood

A thousand times I've watched thy sunset glow,
Calm, cold, impassive, thou immortal pile:
Who holds thee mute knows not thy morning smile,
Nor ever heard thy streams' unceasing flow.

October Days

Now lure the mountains where they rise sublime,
Uniting purple heights with cloud-embattled skies;
While languorous days of August's smoky rime
Give way to sun-bright days of Paradise.

Unrest

I long for the mountains again, O friend,
With desire that causes the heart bitter pain;
And thousand times daily my thoughts thither bend,
For joy seemeth nearer on peak than on plain.

Self-Denial

Amid the fields of plenty, lo, he stands,
A starving terror in strong masque of clay;
No law but duty lifts restraining hands,
And death implored rejects a willing prey.

?

He who has plumbed the depths of that dim and fearful
sea
Which sobs and moans around the small white sphere
of Known,
Has measured life, caused death to crook his hingeless
knee,
And God himself to stir upon his changeless throne.

A Cloud-Birth

The elfish wind careered in wailing volumes
From moon-bright earth into the dizzy skyland,
And skyward flung, 'mong misty moonbeam columns,
Enough earth-griefs to make a cloud-land island.

Fate

What griefs and conflicts sore my life hath known
Would serve immortal Shakespeare's august line,
If them across his heart-strings 'stead of mine
The fateful winds of destiny had blown.

Heroism

Between the heights of loss and gain
The willing slave plods on, unheeding
Those hungry twins, sweet Joy and Pain,
Until the tortured heart is bleeding.

“ The Sweet Unrest of Spring ”

Till thee I met, O Friend, there was no sun,
The mountains hid behind the awful dark;
But now the joyous tides of Spring do run,
And everywhere I hear the meadow lark.

Columbia Gorge

Where swift Columbia's flowing thunder
Rolls glacier-laden peaks between,
It cleft the jeweled range asunder,
And healed the wound with slopes of green.

The Message

I blessed the winged messenger who brought me such
a treasure,
With his grimy little hands and spattered coat;
And of course it mattered nothing, so royal was my
pleasure,
Whether he was worth a million or a groat.

Spring In Iowa

On a wind-swept hill the crocus, early waking up,
Tosses back the snow-drift with its saffron-painted cup;
Thro' the welkin runs a quiver, as a tone had touched
a string—
Swiftly follow wind and rain and sunshine—lo! the
Spring.

A Wild Anemone

For thee, rare Friend of mine, I plucked this wild
anemone
Near where the mountain's crown melts in forest
green.
It none hath kissed save whom the silent peak hath
seen—
Kiss it thyself, dear Poet mine, and give it immortality.

The Poet's Heart

The wild vanilla leaf, which truant boys
Bring home and peddle through the town,
Must first be bruised to shed its fragrance round;
And so the poet's heart, whose griefs and joys
Are all within its deepest cloister found,
Must feel the thorn ere song can wreath his
crown.

So here endeth Idle Rhymes From Oregon as written
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